A COMMENTARY ON THE CONSTITUTION OF THE PHILIPPINES

Let the constitutional lawyers and political scientists argue the fine points of the Constitution of the Philippines. For us let a glance at the expected and unexpected provisions and a personal word suffice.

The Constitutional Convention did what was expected of it when it molded a model of a constitution that fitted the frame prescribed for it by the Philippine Commonwealth and Independence Law. The required Bill of Rights was included and an ordinance of mandatory provisions was appended.

American thought influenced the Constitution more than any other nationality did.

The Constitution was made republican in form with each of the three powers independent of each other. Nevertheless, while the three powers are theoretically supposed to be equal, in truth the order of their importance is executive department, legislative department, and judicial department. The presidential type of government was preferred to the parliamentary type.

Where free to do so, the Constitution reflected Filipino sentiment. A restrained nationalism pervades the document. The preamble begins "The Filipino people," not "The people of the Philippines," as originally intended. The first section of the first article describes "The Philippines," not "The Philippine Islands," as mentioned in the Congressional Act. Only a natural-born citizen of the Philippines is qualified to become President or Vice President, and only a person who has been

for five years a citizen of the Philippines is qualified to become a member of the National Assembly or of the Supreme Court.

The nationalistic spirit is reflected more intensely by the provision that all natural resources, including minerals, belong to the State. Private agricultural land cannot be assigned to unqualified persons—that is, to aliens—that is, to the